

## CD NO.

COUNTRY China

**CONFIDENTIAL**

DATE DISTR. 3 MAR 50

SUBJECT Land Redistribution in North China and Kwangtung

NO. OF PAGES 2

PLACE  
ACQUIRED

25X1

DATE OF  
INFO.

NO. OF ENCLS.  
(LISTED BELOW)

SUPPLEMENT TO  
REPORT NO.

25X1

THIS IS UNEVALUATED INFORMATION

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1. Forty-two villages near Tsiping began the process of land redistribution one year after the Communist occupation of the territory. Under party guidance, villagers in each village held mass meetings to vote on the definition of economic classes and on the division of the people into these classes, so as to apply the rules of apportionment of land and class privileges. Bitter class struggle started and expropriation of land from rich peasants and landlords is now going on. Tenants and poor peasants form the core of the Peasants' Association, which is the new center of class power. The technique is for the party cadres to go into the villages, gather the tenants and poor peasants and let the latter tell their stories of hardship and exploitation under the present system of land distribution. These sessions for complaints are used as centers for attracting other poor elements and fanning their spirit of class antagonism. This group, united through common suffering, is then used as the core for directing land redistribution.
  2. There has been much violence against rich peasants and landlords, but new regulations have been promulgated forbidding violence in the class war and requiring peasants to hand over landlords and usurers to the authorities. Public punishment must be meted out according to legal procedure.
  3. In Kwangtung, the lack of political workers is delaying the whole program of land reform. In such places as Shihch'iao (111-21, 21-48) usurers and landlords have been arrested and imprisoned by local military commissioners. The aim is to win favors from peasants, but these facts are not published in the papers or generally discussed in Canton.
  4. According to a long time Communist party member heading the land reform in Shihch'iao, it will take about six months to launch the work of the Peasants' Association, and will take another six months to reduce rents and interest. It will be from one and one-half to two years before land can be expropriated from the rich peasants and landlords for redistribution. Smart landlords are selling their land and re-investing in commercial and industrial enterprises, which seem to be going to get the protection of the government.
  5. Redistribution of land will provide land for the tillers, but it will not

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letter of 16 October 1978 from the  
Director of Central Intelligence to the  
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Approved For Release 2  
Next Review Date: 2008

Document No. 012  
No Change in Fee ☐  
☒ Declared  
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25X  
GIA-RDP-000457R00044003-00010-4

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revolutionize agricultural production and put the peasant on a par with industrial workers. To achieve this, the Communists will later set up collective farms. This they admit may take 15 to 20 years to do. Large holdings taken over from landlords and officials will be turned into National Farms (國營農場), which are organized on the basis of collective farms. The land taken over from General LI Fu-lin (李福林) in the Lingnan University area has about 250 mu and is now being turned into a national farm. A Chinese expert on collective farms has just arrived from Manchuria to work the project, and young high school students with some mechanical and agricultural training are being recruited for the work. A similar farm is being started in Shihch'iao.

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